

Religious Education Policy

Our Vision

At Bournes Green Infant School the governors, staff, children, parents and carers work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust in a community that is strengthened and enriched by a diversity of background, culture and religion. Our priority is to foster the self-confidence, self-esteem and independence of **all** in a climate of growth and opportunity that will enable us to achieve the highest standards. We actively promote a healthy environment in which children enjoy learning and develop the skills needed to become responsible members of society. We aim to bring learning to life.

'**Strength Through Wisdom**' was the original mission statement for our school. Today we nurture our children to be confident and articulate with an enjoyment of learning in the belief that this will enable them to gain strength from their developing wisdom.

See also related policies: Teaching and Learning, Curriculum, Assessment, Behaviour, Equal Opportunities, DDA Scheme, Role of Curriculum Leader, SEN, Early Years, Healthy Schools, Gifted and Talented, Home Activity Guidelines and all subject policies.

What is the Agreed Syllabus in Religious Education?

Religious Education forms part of the statutory curriculum along with the National Curriculum. It is an entitlement of all registered children in a maintained school. Since 1944 schools have been required to teach religious education to all registered children in maintained schools (with the exception that parents have the right to withdraw their children from the subject).

The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education has been created by the Southend-on-Sea Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC). It is the legal basis for religious education in Southend-on-Sea's non-aided schools.

Christianity occupies a key role in Religious Education within our school; however, **all** children are encouraged to share experiences of their own religious customs, practices and celebrations both within class and with the whole school.

Key Principles

The principles for teaching Religious Education at Bournes Green Infant School are:

- to provide equal access to develop skills, knowledge and understanding
- to provide equality of opportunity for every child to experience and share in a wide variety of religions and cultures

Aims

Our main aim is for all of our children to achieve in Religious Education and to study it with confidence, enjoyment and a sense of achievement.

Religious Education provides opportunities for children to:

- acquire and apply knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in Great Britain
- share experiences of their own religious customs, practices and celebrations both within class and with the whole school
- explore issues to help them understand and respect different religions, beliefs, values and traditions
- develop their sense of identity and belonging and begin to understand what it means to belong to a community
- discuss the influence religious faith has on individuals, communities and the world
- explore similarities and differences between and within religion
- enjoy this time, make progress and gain positively
- reflect and evaluate their own beliefs, values and practices
- develop enquiry and response skills through listening and by showing empathy

To provide these opportunities we will:

- use a variety of learning styles and resources to ensure that we cater for **all** our children
- challenge **all** children to achieve a high standard in Religious Education by developing the ability to analyse and think critically about religious belief and practice
- encourage children to share their own religious customs, practices and celebrations both in class and assemblies

Religious Education does not seek to impose religious beliefs on children, or to compromise the integrity of their own beliefs by favouring one religion over another.

Organisation and Requirements

Our Reception children follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Throughout Early Years, Religious Education should be a discernible element of the curriculum through the teaching of Christianity and the religious experiences and traditions represented in the class and school.

In Key Stage One the teaching programme is taken from the Agreed Syllabus for Southend-on-Sea, whereby children should be taught Religious Education for approximately 50 minutes per week. Throughout the year, children will learn about Christianity, at least one other principal religion (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism) and also a secular world view (Humanism). Where possible the religious traditions of the children must be recognised, acknowledged and included.

Management

The role of the Headteacher is to:

- Remain well informed, provide active leadership and set high expectations for what can be achieved by staff and children
- Make sure there is systematic monitoring and self review of planning, teaching, assessment, learning outcomes and children's work

The role of the Religious Education Leader is to:

- Take the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work, designed to ensure progression and continuity throughout the school
- Support colleagues in their development of plans, their implementation of the schemes of work and in assessment
- Monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning in Religious Education across the school
- Share expertise and gives support that is needed to influence practice throughout the school
- Keep up to date with developments in Religious Education and disseminate information to colleagues, as appropriate
- Take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources in Religious Education

The role of the Teacher is to:

- Have a knowledge of Religious Education within the Agreed Syllabus for Southend-on-Sea and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and use appropriate teaching methods
- Secure high standards through effective teaching

- Use ICT software and web-based resources to enhance teaching and learning
- Set clear challenging targets for all children
- Provide additional challenge for those identified as being more able in this subject and support for the less able
- Make sure appropriate tools and equipment are provided to ensure that all children are able to access the curriculum

The role of the Teaching Assistant is to:

- Encourage
- Question
- Help to make sure that each child plays a full part in every lesson by reinforcing teaching points as well as key language
- Assist individuals or groups through encouragement and by promoting discussion
- Develop children's ideas and thinking by questioning
- Assist children with differentiated work, especially those with individual support plans
- Work with groups on differentiated work across the ability range

The role of the Religious Education Governor is to:

- Meet with the Leader to discuss the development of Religious Education within the school
- Be involved with formatting a policy for Religious Education and monitoring and evaluating

Planning

Planning is based on 'The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education' and adapted to suit the needs of our children. It is the legal basis for Religious Education in Southend-on-Sea's non-aided schools.

In Reception, children follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Religious Education is mainly found under the umbrella of Understanding the World and Personal and Social and Emotional Development. However, it contributes to all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.

The syllabus explains the value and purposes of Religious Education for all children and specifies for teachers what shall be taught within each key stage. It provides a framework for setting high standards of learning.

The teaching programme is based on identified learning objectives and is planned thoroughly to ensure high expectations, consistent approaches and good progression throughout the school. We aim to ensure that every child enjoys this time, makes progress

and gains positively from this subject. Therefore lessons are planned so that all pupils can be included.

At our school teachers' work in year groups and plan cross curricular work whenever possible.

Progression in Religious Education

Children are expected to progress in:

- their learning about religions (attainment target 1): knowledge and understanding of beliefs, practices and forms of religious expression
- their learning from religion (attainment target 2): responding, evaluating and applying knowledge and understanding to pupils' own experiences, sense of meaning and purpose and values and commitments

Progression in Religious Education is shown through children building on and consolidating the skills, processes and areas of knowledge, understanding and evaluation. Progression depends on regular opportunities for pupils to engage in and develop their skills of:

- reflection
- empathy
- investigation
- analysis
- interpretation
- evaluation
- application
- synthesis
- creativity

Assessment

There are no national statutory assessment requirements in Religious Education but schools must report to parents on students' progress in this area. The Agreed Syllabus expects schools to report to parents using the level assessment scale. These level descriptions provide the basis to make judgements about children's' performance at the end of Key Stage One. The two attainment targets '*Learning About Religion*' and '*Learning from Religion*' are closely related and neither should be taught in isolation. Assessment therefore needs to take place in relation to both attainment targets. When deciding on attainment at the end of a Key Stage One, the teacher should judge which description best fits the child's performance.

In Reception a child's progress is recorded using the Foundation Stage Profile and assessed in relation to the early learning goals.

Assessment is ongoing; it will include informal observations, oral questioning and review of work produced. Assessment for learning is used to guide the progress of individual children in Religious Education. It involves identifying the child's progress, determining what each child has learnt and therefore what the next stage in his/her learning should be. This can then be used when considering planning for the next stage of work.

Feedback to Children

Feedback to children on their progress in Religious Education is achieved through informal discussions with the children whilst they are undertaking each task or group work. Effective discussion aims to help the children learn and reflect on their thoughts and the thought of others.

Making links with subjects across the curriculum

Wherever possible, Religious Education links will be made with other subjects across the curriculum.

Parents

Parents are kept informed through termly curriculum letters. Children's attainment is reported on the annual written report.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from Religious Education or specific festivals. We would however, ask any parents who are considering doing so, to come along and discuss this with us. This is because we would need to make alternative provision for those children.

Resources

We have a wide range of themed resources including ICT software to support in the delivery of Religious Education.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

We support our EAL children in a variety of ways in Religious Education. Whole class sessions provide helpful adult models of spoken English and opportunities for careful listening, oral exchange and supportive shared repetition. Group work provides opportunities for intensive, focussed teaching input. We repeat instructions for EAL children when necessary and emphasise key words. Some language may need careful explanation.

Special Educational Needs

The Religious Education curriculum should meet the learning needs of all children including those with learning difficulties or who are gifted and talented, boys and girls, pupils for whom English is an additional language, children from all religious communities, from a wide range of ethnic groups and diverse family backgrounds.

It is our intention whenever possible to include all children in Religious Education lessons. However, some classes may have children whose progress requires special consideration. In this circumstance the class teachers may wish to consider if the Religious Education lesson is the most appropriate way for the child to spend his/her time. In this situation the child's Individual Support Plan will form the basis of their work.

Race Equality

We will make use of opportunities to build upon the diverse backgrounds of all children in the classroom. We celebrate major festivals of several religions.

Able, Gifted and Talented

Able, Gifted and Talented children are identified on our register or awareness list. The use of higher order questioning may be used to encourage children to develop their ideas and thoughts.

Health and Safety

Class teachers are responsible for the safety of the staff, children and volunteers within their class. When handling objects and artefacts from different cultures and religions we teach the children to show respect by handling them with care.

Review

This Policy was reviewed and amended by staff. It was approved by the Governing Body in Spring 2016

It will be reviewed in accordance with the Policies and Key Documentation Review Timetable.